

Department of Health Management and Policy
Faculty of Health Sciences
American University of Beirut

Special Topics in Health Management and Policy
Strengthening health systems response to noncommunicable diseases (HMPD 354BA)

Fall semester AY 2017 - 2018

Course Instructor

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Office hours: By appointment

Class time and location

Thursdays, 5:30-7:10 pm (some sessions subject to change in agreement with students)
Classroom: Van Dyck, room103

Course description

This is a graduate (2-credit) course focused on exploring the changes in health systems¹ needed to better respond to the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)² in Lebanon and the Arab and Eastern Mediterranean region. Countries have made limited progress in responding to this burden, which calls for new thinking and approaches, especially in light of the regional and global commitments in NCD prevention and control on which countries have signed. The course examines how health systems need to change and adopt to better respond to NCDs and meet these commitments. The course considers the socioeconomic, political, and policy drivers of the continued rise of NCDs in defining the appropriate health system response in the different contexts around the region. However, while the course focuses on this region, its contents are relevant to other regions, particularly of low- and middle-income countries. The course crosses several disciplines including health systems analysis and epidemiology.

The course structure will be adapted to enhance the learning experience based on the number of registered students: Student-led seminar format (for 6-8 students), mixed methods format (for 9-15 students), or lecture-based format (for over 15 students).

The course instructor will use Moodle to administer the course and will use blended approaches to learning (although the course will not be a fully blended course). The course will utilize presentations, readings, problem-solving exercises, role-playing, reflective writing, and class and group discussions to achieve its learning objectives. As this is the first offering of the course, students' input and engagement will be key.

Throughout the course, the student will assume a role of a particular stakeholder, for example a policymaker, a planner, a service provider, an academic/researcher, a community advocate, an NGO member or a private sector member. The student will engage with the issues and assignments in the course from the position of the respective stakeholder throughout the course. She/he will choose a country or locality to work on and will provide perspectives and offer practical solutions to move the NCD agenda forward in her/his chosen context.

¹ For the purpose of this course, the term 'health systems' is interpreted broadly to mean society-wide public health effort, beyond the traditional components of health systems included the WHO definition.

² For the purpose of this course NCDs extend beyond the four major groups defined by the World Health Organization (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, diabetes and chronic lung diseases) to include mental ill-health and other NCDs affecting the "bottom billion".

Target students

The course targets students interested in conceptualizing and examining alternative approaches and designing, planning and/or implementing programs and interventions to address the rising NCD burden and NCD inequities and meet the regional and global commitments in NCD prevention and control. The course thus emphasizes the relevance to local realities and practicality to concerned stakeholders.

As the course explores dimensions across several disciplines and fields of practice, the course is of interest to range of potential students/participants. These include graduate students of the health sciences including public health (especially in health management and policy as well as epidemiology), medicine, nutrition, and nursing as well as students of management and administration, and practitioners in any of these areas.

Course learning objectives and contribution to program and concentration competencies

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Delineate the limitations of current health systems that impede adequate response to rising NCD challenges in this region and LMICs.
2. State the key elements of needed national health system response to NCDs, as endorsed in international bodies, including the *overall* scope (from legal framework through health policy reform to changes in service provision) and *specific* adaptation (to respond to selected NCDs and risk factors)
3. Differentiate between a strategy and an action plan for NCDs and outline the key elements of a national or subnational action plan for NCDs
4. Develop examples of multisectoral collaboration in NCD prevention and control
5. Examine the complementary and competing roles of various actors, including health and non-health state and non-state ones, in the response to NCDs
6. Develop a framework for monitoring health system response to NCDs
7. Synthesize data, information sources, and ideas into a proposal for NCD program/intervention and articulate clearly to audiences.

The course contributes to the following core competencies of the Master of Public Health (MPH) program at FHS:

- CC1. Analyze the biological, physical, social, economic, and political determinants of a health issue.
- CC7. Analyze health care systems and policies.
- CC12. Adopt a multidisciplinary approach in assessing, researching, and responding to public health issues and needs.
- CC13. Apply relevant theory learned in course work to real-life situations.
- CC14. Critically assess the interplay of theory and practice in public health.

The course also contributes to the following competencies of the Health Management and Policy (HMP) concentration of MPH program:

- HMC5. Demonstrate ability to integrate and synthesize health information to plan, implement and evaluate interventions and programs
- HMC6. Analyze the health policy cycle and its applicability to the local and regional context
- HMC8. Apply ethical principles in health management and policy research and professional practice

The course instructor will revise the course learning objectives and share the specific learning objectives under each of the aforementioned MPH and HMP competencies to which the course contributes after the first week of the class based on the students' feedback of the overall course and its learning objectives.

Course requirements and student evaluation

The course will build on the foundation introduced by other courses on 1) the burden and epidemiology of NCDs and the socioeconomic, policy and political drivers, whether local, national, regional, or global, of the rising burden of NCDs and of NCD inequities; and 2) health systems functions, challenges and performance. While prior courses in these areas are not pre-requisites for taking this course, some knowledge of these subjects would be important. The course instructor will provide a refresher on NCD epidemiology and health systems in the region (see Course contents). For students who feel the need for a more in-depth review of these two areas, the course instructor can suggest a few key readings and can provide a one-on-one review, best to be completed prior to the start of the course. Please contact course instructor to request the readings and book an appointment for the review.

Student evaluation will depend on the course format (which in turn will depend on the number of registered students).

- For a seminar-format, evaluation will be based on student preparation and participation in class discussions (20%), leading the preparation, presentation and discussion of one seminar and preparation of a brief 2-4 page subject review (20%), final presentation (20%), and final paper (40%).
- For a mixed-methods course, evaluation will be based on student preparation and participation in class discussions (20%), co-leading the preparation, presentation and discussion of one seminar (20%), final presentation (20%), and final paper (40%).
- For a lecture-based format, evaluation will be based on student preparation and participation in class discussions (10%), expanded subject review (30%), final presentation (20%), and final paper (40%).

Description of aforementioned evaluation components:

- Leading or co-leading the preparation, presentation and discussion of one seminar: (Course objectives 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8)

Student will choose one topic in the course schedule, review the topic in detail (beyond assigned class readings), discuss the subject with the instructor, and lead/co-lead the preparation, presentation and discussion of one seminar.

- Subject review: (Course objectives 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8)

In relation to the chosen focus of the final paper, the student carries out a salient review of the subject at hand (covering both the NCD challenge and the health system situation) and write a 4-10 page paper with references that provides a coherent review of the subject at hand. This review will provide the background for the final paper.

- Final paper and presentation: (Course objectives 5-9 primarily and secondarily 1-4)

The student will take one NCD challenge of interest to the chosen country/locality and stakeholder position and develop a proposal on how to adapt health systems to address/solve this challenge and make a presentation of the proposal. A guide for developing the proposal will be shared with class. Assignment of the grade for the proposal will be based on the following criteria: the proper framing of the issue to be tackled, soundness and detail of proposed program/intervention including practical and implementable steps, supporting arguments, consideration of cost and timeframe, and incorporation of risk analysis, in addition to quality of synthesis and writing. The assignment of grade for the presentation will be based on the following criteria: clarity of ideas, ability to convince the audience of proposed program/intervention, quality of slides, and adherence to time.

- Class participation: (Course objectives 1-8)

Students will be called upon to share the perspectives of their chosen stakeholder position. Assignment of grade will depend on the students expressed interest, reading and comprehension of course material, ability to reflect the positions of the chosen stakeholder, and engagement with others in the class.

Attendance of class is expected and understood as part of class participation but will not per se be checked nor graded.

Conduct, academic Integrity and accessibility

The AUB expects its students to abide by high standards of ethical conduct and academic integrity. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. The American University of Beirut has a strict anti-cheating and anti-plagiarism policy. Please review the [AUB Student Code of Conduct](#) and familiarize yourself with definitions and penalties. Penalties include failing marks on the assignment in question, suspension or expulsion from University and a permanent mention of the disciplinary action in the student's records. If you're in doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, ask your instructor because it is your responsibility to know.

AUB strives to make learning experiences accessible for all. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please do not hesitate to inform the Accessible Education Office. In order to ensure that you receive the support you need and to facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you must register with the Accessible Education Office (AEO) as soon as possible: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314

Course schedule

The following course schedule is based on a lecture –based format (for more than 15 students). It will be modified to fit the learning needs of actual registered students.

Date	Topic
1. Aug 31 (Obj 1-2)	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Course overview• Why NCDs? Why now?
2. Sep 7 (Obj 1-2)	Health systems & NCDs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaching health systems from the lens of NCDs (& vice versa)• Adapting health systems: What is it all about?
Sep 8	Change of schedule for the Fall 2017 semester (Drop & Add)
3. Sep 15 (Obj 1-2)	The evolving NCD agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global and regional commitments to action on NCDs• Unaddressed agendas of NCD inequities and new agenda of NCDs in emergencies & protracted crises
4. Sep 19 (Obj 1, 4)	Policy & governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Global Action Plan on NCDs 2013-2020• National action on NCDs: Lessons from middle-income countries
5. Sep 28 (Obj 2-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• National NCD Prevention and Control Plan (NCD-PCP) in Lebanon
6. Oct 5 (Obj 2-5)	Not going at it alone <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCDs, health systems and the social agenda• How can we work with non-health actors & sectors
7. Oct 12 (Obj 3, 4, 5)	Care for NCDs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Models for service delivery reform & care programs• Medicines and technologies (Estimating needs, ensuring access, increasing adherence)
8. Oct 19 (Obj 3-5)	Care for NCDs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenges of emergencies & protracted crises
Oct 26 (Obj 3-5)	How to pay for it? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approaches to estimating financial needs• Approaches to financing NCDs
9. Nov 2 (Obj 1-5)	Who will do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Figuring out human resources needs for NCDs

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making the best use of the human resources we have
10.	Nov 9 (Obj 2, 3, 5)	Can we do it? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing national capacity for NCDs • Models for strengthening capacity
11.	Nov 16 (Obj 2, 5)	Monitoring progress <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A systematic approach to assessing progress of the health system response to NCDs • Choosing the right indicators for different contexts • Generating data and regular reporting
12.	Nov 23 (Obj 2, 5)	Wrap up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesis of course material • Reflections on the learning experience
	Nov 24	Last day for withdrawal from courses for the Fall 2017 semester
13.	Nov 30 (Obj 9)	Presentations
14.	Dec 7 (Obj 9)	Presentations

Course faculty

In addition to the course instructor, other faculty members from FHS and other AUB faculties, and external experts will contribute to this course as guests.

Readings and resources

The course will rely mostly on article readings and other material (including AV) made available by the course instructor and visiting faculty for different sessions.

Readings for various sessions

Readings, about 1-2 per session, will be available on Moodle.

Resources

Books

No book is required for this course. However, the following books are very useful and are available from the course instructor to borrow for short periods.

1. Ama de-Graft Aikins and Charles Agyemang (Eds). (2016) Chronic Non-communicable Diseases in Low and Middle-income Countries. CABI: UK
2. George Weisz. (2014) Chronic disease in the twentieth century. A history. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, USA
3. Louis Galambos and Jeffrey L. Stuchio. (Eds.) (2013) Noncommunicable diseases in the developing world. Addressing gaps in global policy and research. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, USA
4. David McQueen. (Ed.) (2013) Global Handbook on Noncommunicable Diseases and Health Promotion (2013 Edition). Springer. Available for download and personal use only from AUB Libraries.
5. David Stuckler and Karen Siegel (Eds.). (2011) Sick Societies: Responding to the global challenge of chronic disease. Oxford University Press. Oxford: UK

The following books provide important perspectives & experiences

6. Ama De-Graft Aikins, Samuel Agyei-Mensah, and Charles Agyemang (Eds.). (2014) Chronic Non-Communicable Diseases in Ghana. Multidisciplinary Perspectives. Sub-Saharan Publishers; Ghana
7. Health Transitions and the Double Disease Burden in Asia and the Pacific: Histories of Responses to Non-Communicable and Communicable Diseases (Routledge Advances in Asia-Pacific Studies). Routledge, UK

Key UN and WHO publications and documents

1. WHO. (2013) Global action plan for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland
2. WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. (2015) Framework for action to implement the United Nations Political Declaration on noncommunicable diseases, including indicators to assess country progress by 2025. World Health Organization: Cairo, Egypt